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PROGRAM NPR Dateline

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SUBJECT Disclosing Classified Information

PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN: I was going to have an opening statement, but I decided that what I was going to say I wanted to get a lot of attention, so I'm going to wait and leak it.

SANFORD UNGAR: President Reagan joked about leaks during a news conference in early 1982. But in private, according to his aides, he's more angry than amused. And his anger has led him to issue a new executive order putting controls on people who work for the government and those who leave and write and lecture about their experience. That order has, in turn, caused a furor.

This is NPR Dateline. I'm Sanford Ungar.

The executive order signed by Mr. Reagan last month requires federal employees with a security clearance to sign a pledge to follow the rules and to submit to polygraph examinations if asked to do so. But a more important and more sweeping provision says that all those who hold the highest kind of security clearance must, after leaving government, submit their writings and lectures for review by the agency where they worked.

President Reagan's complaint is no different from those of several other recent Presidents.

RICHARD WILLARD: It is a major problem. The Justice Department receives a large number of referrals every year from agencies that have had their classified information disclosed in the media, mostly, they think, because one of their employees or another government employee has, without authorization, passed it along.